

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Furthermore the state of mandatory educational television broadcasts is abominable. Companies like Sinclair nonchalantly brush this responsibility off, despite the current legislature requiring educational broadcasts. The programs which are claimed to be educational in nature are simply a joke most of the time. Not only are the programs not educational but often times programs that do have some educational value are aired at completely unreasonable times for their target audience. For example a show to teach elementary school children may be aired at 2 AM, despite clear legislation against this! This is obviously done in an effort to minimize any fiscal losses this program would impose on the station. These actions show how lightly the corporations take their public duty to better society and follow legislature.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.